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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS, OBAMA'S NOMINATION
OF STEVEN CHU

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused
December 13-15 news coverage on former President Chen Shui-bian's

indictment and on the launching of the "big three links," namely,
air, sea and postal service directly between Taiwan and mainland
China. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the
pro-independence "Liberty Times" alleged that the launching of the
big three links is a significant step of the Ma Ying-jeou
administration's march toward Taiwan's ultimate unification with
China. Another editorial in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times"
held a more positive view on the big three links, urging that every
sector in Taiwan seize the opportunity to create a new scope of
cross-strait relations. Regarding United States President-elect
Barack Obama's nomination of Nobel laureate Steven Chu to be energy
secretary, an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification,
English-language "China Post" applauded Obama's decision. End
summary.

12. Cross-Strait Relations

A) "Ma Ying-jeou's Launch of the Big Three Links a Significant Step
Toward the Ultimate Unification"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000]
editorialized (12/15):

"... Frankly speaking, the Ma [Ying-jeou] Administration's launch of
the big three links [air, sea and postal service] between Taiwan and
China at this juncture was out of accord with the law. [They]
apparently violated current laws and regulations, such as the
Regulations Governing the Relations between the People of the Taiwan
Area and the People of the Mainland China Area, and created a
serious threat to Taiwan's security. Furthermore, in terms of the
economy, [the launch of the big three links] will not only fail to
bring about the full efficiency the Ma Administration expected, but
also will wallop Taiwan's sluggish economy because of [Taiwan's]
hasty leaning toward China. In other words, the Ma administration's
use of the three links as a remedy for its incompetence in
governance, which is similar to a drowning man catching at a straw,
is not only not an antidote, but also could be the poison that will
kill Taiwan's economy. ..."

"We are especially worried that once the to-and-fro travel time
between Taiwan and major Chinese cities, such as Shanghai, is
reduced to a single day, Taiwan will tilt toward China even more
than before....In the long run, Taiwan and China will form a
relationship that is, though not in name unification, unification in
reality. Everything in Taiwan will be under China's full control.
..."

B) "Greet the New Scope of Cross-Strait Relations after the Big
Three Links"

The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 220,000]
editorialized (12/15):

"... Indeed, while the whole world is falling into a rare, one-hundred year financial tsunami and economic slowdown, no one can guarantee that the launch of the big three links [air, sea and postal service between Taiwan and China] can change anything immediately. After all, the mainland is also facing the challenge of economic downturn. However, this [the launch of the big three links] is, in the end, an opportunity. The cabinet's financial and economic officials, leaders of industries, etc., should all think about how to take advantage of this rare historic opportunity at this juncture and re-draft strategies for industries to be competitive. For example, in terms of government policy, [government officials] should think about how to take advantage of the opportunity of China increasing its internal demand so as to attract Taiwan businessmen and foreign enterprises to establish headquarters in Taiwan; how to develop [Taiwan] as an operations center, and a planning and management center. Individual industry should think about how to establish a whole new strategy regarding the division of labor vertically and horizontally through an overall re-arrangement in the region. The planning of these tasks should be initiated as soon as possible after the launch of the big three links today."

13. Obama's Nomination of Steven Chu

"Two Cheers for Steven Chu"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (12/13):

"... As Obama has made climate change and energy independence a central theme in his campaign platform, his selection of Dr. Chu (Zhu Diwen in pinyin) as the core of his energy team deserves two cheers for putting the best man on the right job and for his vision OF STEVEN CHU

and farsightedness. The 1997 Nobel laureate is an academician in both Taiwan's Academia Sinica and mainland China's Academy of Sciences. Dr. Chu will be the second Chinese-American cabinet member of the U.S. government since Elaine Chao (Zhao Xiaolan in pinyin), the departing secretary of labor. ...

"With such a selfless leader who taps the country's best and brightest to surround him, the revival of America can be anticipated, although he has warned against over expectations, saying, 'the economy is likely to get worse before it gets better.' No wonder that his approval ratings have soared to 73%. Will the euphoria prove ephemeral as in the case of our President Ma Ying-jeou? Probably not, because Ma's selection of his transition team was flawed and controversial from the onset. Obama is bring change to America, together with hope and confidence."

YOUNG